



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: TRISH FARMER
(615) 313-4907 (OFFICE)
(615) 313-5695 (TTY) OR
MICHELLE MOWERY JOHNSON
(615) 313-4707 (OFFICE)

GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS OCTOBER DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

EVENTS HELD STATEWIDE TO RECOGNIZE ABILITIES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Governor Phil Bredesen has designated October as the month to generate awareness about the talents and abilities of Tennessee's citizens with disabilities.

"Workers with Disabilities: Ready for the Global Workforce" is the theme of the 2006 National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The theme calls attention to an untapped personnel resource in Tennessee and across the country - persons with disabilities.

"We must make certain that every citizen in Tennessee has the opportunity for employment," said Bredesen. "Persons with disabilities can and must be important contributors to our workforce. The 2006 theme highlights the fact that workers with disabilities are an underutilized and ambitious group of citizens eager to pursue their career dreams."

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) within the Department of Human Services provides services to Tennesseans with disabilities. Approximately 3,000 individuals with the most significant disabilities, such as quadriplegia, blindness and traumatic brain injuries, were employed after completing rehabilitation programs during fiscal year 2005-06.

"Employers that actively recruit qualified employees with disabilities often discover untapped skills and talents," said Human Services Commissioner Gina Lodge. "As a group often overlooked, individuals with disabilities are committed and motivated employees. They also contribute valuable consumer perspectives regarding what the disability market needs and desires."

Seventeen Tennessee Rehabilitation Centers located in rural communities throughout the state and the residential comprehensive Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Smyrna provide numerous services to clients, including vocational training, physical or occupational therapy and transitional life skills. For more information on the centers, visit <http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/rehab/trc.htm>.

The Tennessee Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities and DRS staff are working with businesses and agencies across Tennessee on activities recognizing Disability Employment Awareness Month. Attached is a partial list of scheduled events.

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CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR
400 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TN 37248
615.313.4700

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH SCHEDULE

October 4	The Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Franklin, the Williamson County – Franklin Chamber of Commerce and Workforce Employer Outreach Committee ADA Symposium from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Contact: Patsy Plumlee (615) 790-5509, ext. 114	Franklin Williamson County Public Library
October 6 & 7	Tennessee Arts Commission & Very Special Arts present “Arts Talk”, Tennessee’s Forum for Careers in the Arts for Persons with Disabilities Contact: www.arts.state.tn.us/artstalkinfo.htm or Lisa Hester (615) 532-9797	Murfreesboro MTSU
October 7	Access Nashville Day is a volunteer project which has sessions about disability awareness and accessibility issues for college students, caregivers and persons with disabilities. Contact: www.accessnashvilleonline.org or Carole Moore Slater (615)322-8529	Nashville
October 11	Greene County Personnel Association/Workforce Employer Outreach Committee (WEOC) Disability Month Symposium Contact: Teresa Smith (423) 434-6613	Greeneville General Morgan Inn
October 14	Second Annual GOFEST! Sponsored by UnumProvident and the City of Chattanooga strives to eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities from Noon to 6 p.m. Website: http://www.gofest.info Contact information: (423) 756-2211	Chattanooga First Tennessee Pavilion
October 17	Area Recognition Awards Luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. by Southeast Tennessee Placement Consortium Contact: Carol Martin (423) 634-6712	Chattanooga Convention & Trade Center

October 17	Disability Awareness Community Open House The Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Union City from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Special guest Congressman John Tanner Contact: Chris Holbrook (731) 884-2600	Union City
October 18	Disability Mentoring Day Contact: Trish Farmer (615) 313-4907	Statewide Recognition
October 24	Area Recognition Awards Luncheon The Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Dyersburg Contact: Alma Ruth Michael (731) 286-8313	Dyersburg
October 25	TRC Disability Awareness Day Contact: Gale Demick (615) 459-6811, ext. 246	Smyrna TN Rehabilitation Center
October 25	Very Special Arts of Tennessee Evening Show at the Ryman Auditorium featuring performing artists with disabilities Contact: Lori Kissinger (615) 826-5252	Nashville